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*"To the solid ground  
Of Nature trusts the mind which builds for aye."*—WORDSWORTH.

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### THE BOOK OF THE DEAD.

*The Papyrus of Ani in the British Museum.* The Egyptian text with interlinear transliteration and translation, a running translation, introduction, &c. By E. A. Wallis Budge, Litt. D., Keeper of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities. Printed by order of the Trustees, 1895. (London: Longmans, Kegan Paul, &c.)

PERHAPS one of the most attractive and popular departments of science is that which treats of the early customs and beliefs of primitive man. Within recent years considerable attention has been directed to this subject. Not only have specialists, such as Mannhardt, Waitz, Bastian, and Tylor, to mention a few prominent names, devoted themselves to the collection and classification of material, but a great body of the reading public have followed their labours with intense interest, and have embarked on a course of original inquiry on their own account. The chief reason for this widespread study of comparative religion is to be sought in the fact that no demands are made on the student for any special training in order that he may appreciate its methods and results. Let him but have the passion of the collector and a love for his subject, and he is fully equipped for his work; all he requires beside are books that will yield reliable information concerning the folk-lore or superstition of any early or primitive race. Readers of *NATURE*, therefore, will be interested in hearing some account of a remarkable work, recently published by the Trustees of the British Museum, which deals with the religion of the oldest nation in the world whose records have survived to the present day.

The nation to which we refer, it is needless to say, are the Egyptians, whose civilisation on the banks of the Nile stretches back into a remote antiquity. Both the art and literature of this people were in the main the product of their religious belief in a future existence; what we possess of the former we owe to its preservation in the tomb, while a great part of the latter has come down to us in a body of religious compositions to which

Egyptologists have given the comprehensive title of "The Book of the Dead." It is with "The Book of the Dead" that the work in question deals. In the year 1888 the Trustees of the British Museum acquired the largest and most perfect specimen of this composition as preserved by that class of papyri which date from the second half of the eighteenth dynasty (about B.C. 1500-1400). About four months ago the Trustees published a second edition of the *facsimile* of the papyrus, and now Dr. Wallis Budge, the Keeper of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities, has produced a volume dealing exhaustively with the contents of this unique document.

It would be impossible to treat at any length in a short review the many problems discussed in the work before us. We can, however, briefly indicate its general scope and contents. Dr. Budge has given a transliteration and literal translation of the hieroglyphic text, arranged interlinearly, which will be of great value to the student. This is followed by a running translation, together with a description and explanation of the various vignettes with which the papyrus is profusely illustrated—a portion of the work which will be welcomed by the general reader. Perhaps of even greater importance, however, is the Introduction. Here the author has traced in detail the history and growth of "The Book of the Dead," from its first appearance on the Pyramids of the fifth dynasty to its latest hieratic recension in the early centuries of the Christian era. From the hands of the priests of Hierapolis we follow the work to Thebes, where we first find it divided into definite sections or chapters, each with its distinctive title. Thence, through the closely allied version of the twentieth dynasty to Saïs, where each chapter received its definite place in the series, and the order there introduced continued in use down to the Greek occupation of the country. Having laid before the reader a critical digest of the external history of the work, Dr. Budge then turns to internal questions, and proceeds to summarise the chief aspects of Egyptian belief, supporting each of his theses with citations from the native literature. He treats at length of the legend of Osiris, so closely connected with the doctrine of eternal life, and thence passes to the Egyptian idea of God. This section is followed by a detailed

description of the gods of "The Book of the Dead," and of the principal geographical and mythological places mentioned therein. The practical side of Egyptian worship then engages our attention, and we see the priest performing the complicated system of ritual and ceremony that accompanied the burial of the dead; and, the ground having thus been cleared, one passes on to a consideration of the Papyrus of Ani itself. Ani, in whose honour the work was written, was chancellor of the ecclesiastical revenues and endowments of Abydos and Thebes. From the fact of his exalted official position, therefore, we may, with Dr. Budge, regard his Papyrus as "typical of the funeral book in vogue among the Theban nobles of his time."

In the course of the Introduction Dr. Budge has admirably distinguished the uses of the Egyptian word *neter*, which correspond to a transition from anthropomorphic and polytheistic ideas to a lofty monotheism. The derivation of the word is a moot point among Egyptologists, though all agree in rendering the word by "god." Its original signification, however, may be disregarded, for it does not affect the later history of the word, with which we are at present concerned. Whatever its origin, there is no doubt that the singular *neter* is often used to express an entirely different conception to that conveyed by *neteru*, its plural, the former being employed to designate a supreme god, the latter a number of powers and beings, which were held to be supernatural, but were finite and endowed with human qualities and limitations. The truth of this will be evident to any one who will read through the passages collected by Dr. Budge in support of his contention. Dr. Budge cites the similar difficulty that attaches to the interpretation of the Hebrew word *elohim*, a comparison that might be dwelt on with advantage. One point of difference, however, may here be noted. In the history of the Hebrews we can point to the exact period when the radical change from polytheism to the belief in one god took place. With the rise of the prophets in the ninth century B.C. the nation imbibed the loftier conception, and they assimilated the prophetic teaching with such effect, that, during the post-exilic collection of the national literature, all traces of their former polytheism were as far as possible obliterated. In their literature, therefore, as it has reached us, the earlier national beliefs have survived only in indirect allusions and in the form of single words. With the Egyptians, on the other hand, this change in conception can be ascribed to no particular epoch. We find the idea of a supreme god in existence as early as the fifth dynasty; yet throughout the whole period of Egyptian history there existed side by side with it the lower conception of half-human deities, and the belief in an eternal and infinite god was not considered inconsistent with legends concerning lesser deities, who could eat and drink, and, like men, grew old and died.

To this tolerance, or rather attachment, displayed by the Egyptians for their legends and traditional beliefs, students of comparative religion at the present day owe a lasting debt of gratitude. For many of the legends preserved in late papyri have been handed down unchanged from earlier times, while the earlier monuments themselves have escaped the fury of the iconoclast. We

will refer to one such legend cited by Dr. Budge. In a text of the fifth dynasty, the deceased king Unas is described in the form of a god as feeding upon men and gods. He hunts the gods in the fields, and, having snared them, roasts and eats the best of them, using the old gods and goddesses for fuel; and, by thus eating their bodies and drinking the blood, he absorbs their divine nature and life into his own. Many parallels to this quaint legend might be cited from the primitive beliefs of other races.

We cannot conclude without a reference to the un-polemical spirit in which the book is written, which is perhaps the result of a scientific training in Semitic languages and literature having been brought to bear on the difficult problems of Egyptian religion. Throughout the work it is evident that one of the chief aims of Dr. Budge has been to assist the reader to understand the evidence which documents nearly 7000 years old are here made to produce, and to judge of its value for himself. To the anthropologist and the student of comparative religion we, therefore, believe the work will be equally valuable.

#### THE POLLINATION OF FLOWERS.

*Over de Bevruchting der Bloemen in het Kempisch Gedeehte van Vlaanderen.* By J. Mac Leod. With 125 Figures. (Gent: Vuylsteke, 1894.)

THIS book is prefaced with a historical introduction which traces the study of the biology of flowers from the appearance of the work of Camerarius in 1691 to the present day. Not only does the author give an account of the work of the various writers, but he also devotes a good deal of space to criticising their conclusions, and comparing them with one another. Of these criticisms, it may be noticed, that he considers that too much importance has been ascribed to the colours of flowers in attracting insect-visitors, and he adduces several facts in support of his view. From these examples it appears that there are certainly some cases in which the bright colours of flowers have not got the object of attracting insects; yet surely in the vast majority of cases, whether the development of bright colours was primarily for this object or not, the showy floral leaves act as advertisements to catch the eye of wandering insects. As the author substitutes no definite theory to account for the colouration of flowers, it seems probable that the old view will hold its ground.

The greater part of the book (about 430 pp.) is taken up with an account of the floral mechanisms of the plants found in East and West Flanders. The mechanisms of a large number of species are carefully described, and the descriptions are illustrated by many good woodcuts, in great part original, in a few cases borrowed from other authors. At the conclusion of the description of each species a list of their insect-visitors is given; these lists appear to be very complete, and will doubtless be useful for reference.

The latter part of the work is largely taken up with an endeavour to find a parallelism between the annual evolution of the various classes of plants and insects, classified according to their mutual biological relations. But the author admits that this attempt has not been successful.